

Architectural, Historical and Sentimental analysis of Pushtimargiya Gruh-Mandir

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“ गृहे स्थित्वा स्वधर्मतः ”



Objectives:

1. To assess the concept of “गृहसेवा” in Pushtibhakti Sampraday, as propagated by Mahaprabhu ShriVallabhacharya along with its architectural and historical facets.
2. To trace out the development of construction pattern of Gruh-Mandir in Pushtimarg.
3. To understand the “भावपक्ष” or sentiments as explained in the Pushtimargiya tradition along with the architectural designs and method of construction.

Scriptural ordinance for concept of Pushtimargiya Gruh-Seva

we may first of all discuss the concept of “Devpooja” which has been explained as a “Nitykarm” i.e. the duties which have to be accomplished by a vaidic on daily basis. Along with स्नान, सन्ध्या, जप, होम, स्वाध्याय as Nitykarm, देवप्रणिधान - worshipping deity on daily basis has also been explained as a duty which had to be performed at his own house with his family members.

Along with this culture the tradition and method of worshipping deity/Devata in a public temple was also accepted in Hinduism and wealthy devotees or devoted family-caste-community used to build a public temple, which followed the “Aagamtantrik” methods for worshipping Vishnu, Shiv and Shakti.

Those public temples used to work as religious body as well as cultural institutions and were managed by a family, caste or community respectively. Therefore after having a look towards the above fact, we come upon the principle that in Hindu tradition we have 2 methods approved by the Tantra for worshiping the deity; (1) स्वार्थ प्रतिष्ठा (2) परार्थ प्रतिष्ठा.

(1) स्वार्थ प्रतिष्ठा – To accomplish the Pratishtha of Devvighrah to be worshiped by devotee himself and his family by making use of his own family and property for Devpooja. In this type of worshipping method devotee is prohibited to make use of place, or material which would be offered by anyone else in monatory or non-monatry form other than his family. Therefore he is supposed to accomplish the devpooja at his own house, which will be considered as “Devalay” – the place where dev resides.

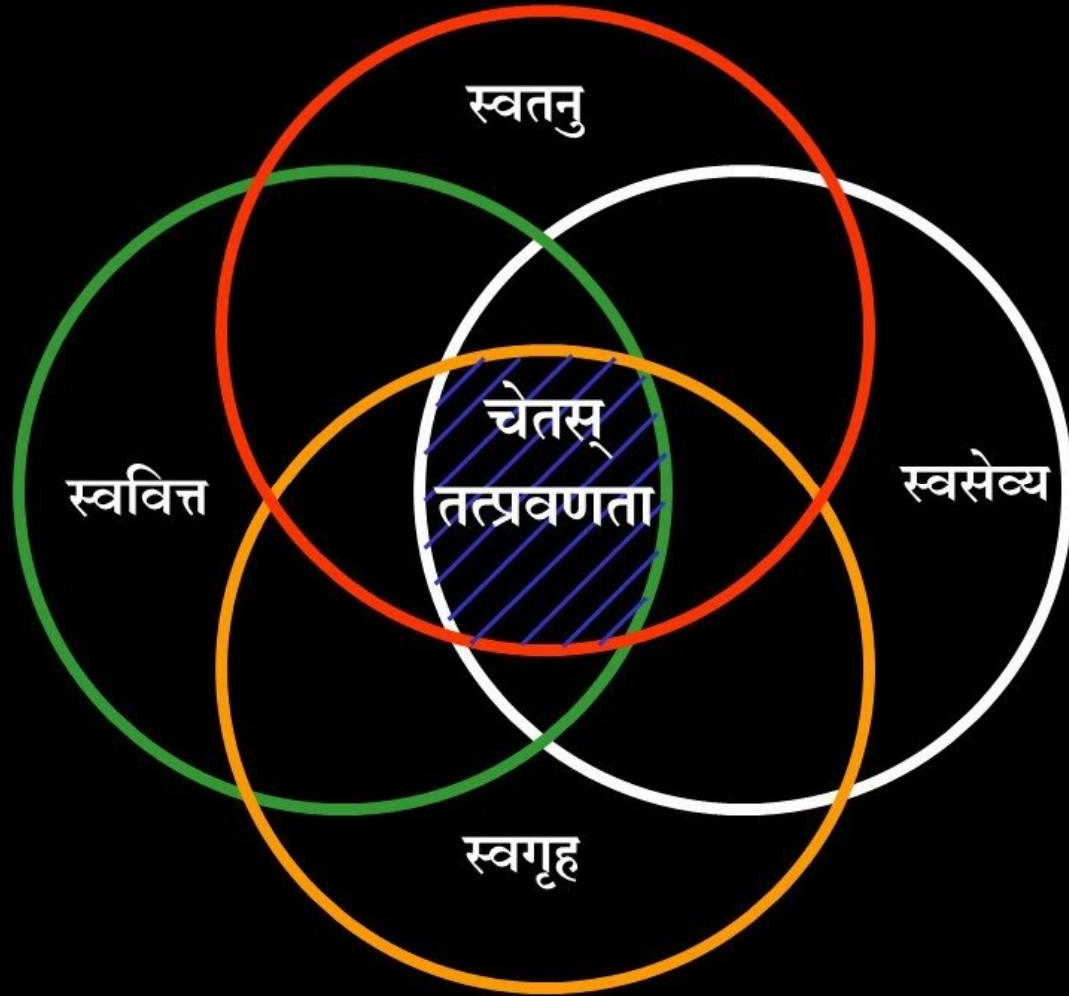
(2) परार्थ प्रतिष्ठा – This method is accomplished to do the Devpratishtha in the public temple, where the Devvighrah

doesn't belong to any particular person, but for the whole community of devotees or Vaidiks and therefore the rights to have Darshan and offer objects/money remains with the whole community and not with any particular person.

➤ Now having a look at the principles of Pushtibhakti Sampraday as preached by Shri Vallabhachary, it is quite clear that as per the principles of Sampraday devotees are supposed to worhsip Shri Krishna, as a स्वार्थप्रतिष्ठापित देवविग्रह. Shri Vallabhachary states in his treatise - गृहे स्थित्वा स्वधर्मतः which means that the way to make this seed of devotion; which remains in the heart of a devotee is to remain a householder and follow his duties by performing Krishna Seva at his own house. चेतस्तत्प्रवणं सेवा तत्सिद्ध्यै तनुवित्तजा। This means that worship/seva is defined as the mind of a devotee being completely intent on Krishna. To accomplish that, one performs worship with his own body/family and possessions.

We may understand this concept through the given illustration.

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स्वसेव्य - The Devvighrah must belong to the devotee himself and must be of his ownership and must not belong to any public trust or community.

स्वगृह - The devotee is supposed to accomplish the worship/seva of his devvighrah at his own house/house of his ownership or owned by a family member.

स्वतनु - The devotee is supposed to perform worship/seva using his own body or along with his family members, and not by hiring any paid servant for seva,

स्ववित्त - The devotee must make use of his own property and possessions for worship and is not supposed to accept anything from anyone in monetary or non-monetary form.

So after having a look towards the above principles of PushtiBhakti sect, it is quite clear that no Pushtimargiya Krishna worship can be accomplished in the form of public temple as it is supposed to be performed at one's own house.

In addition to this fact, the word “Mandir” in sanskrit doesn't just mean a temple, but also means a house, palace, habitation or any abiding place. Therefore this term doesn't bound itself to be translated as a public temple only. Prior to the use of word “Mandir” for the temple, the words like “Devaalay”, “Devsthaan”, “Dewaswom” etc are comparatively former and traditional terms which refer to a place of worship or the place where the “Devata” resides and therefore doesn't always mean to be a public temple.

Historical aspect of Pushtimargiya Gruh-Mandir

- As we went through the principles of Pushtibhakti Sampraday in depth, it is quite clear that each and every devotee is supposed to perform seva of his Swasevy at his own place and nowhere else.
- Now as we have a look towards the historical evidences as available in “84 vaishnav varta” – the stories of 84 disciples of Shri Vallabhachary, we find that all the disciples had multiple sort of economical conditions and therefore didn't had the capacity to offer lots of materials. “Padmanabhadas” – a disciple Of Vallabhachary was so poor that he just used to offer boiled or roasted garbanzo/chola to his Sevyswaroop.

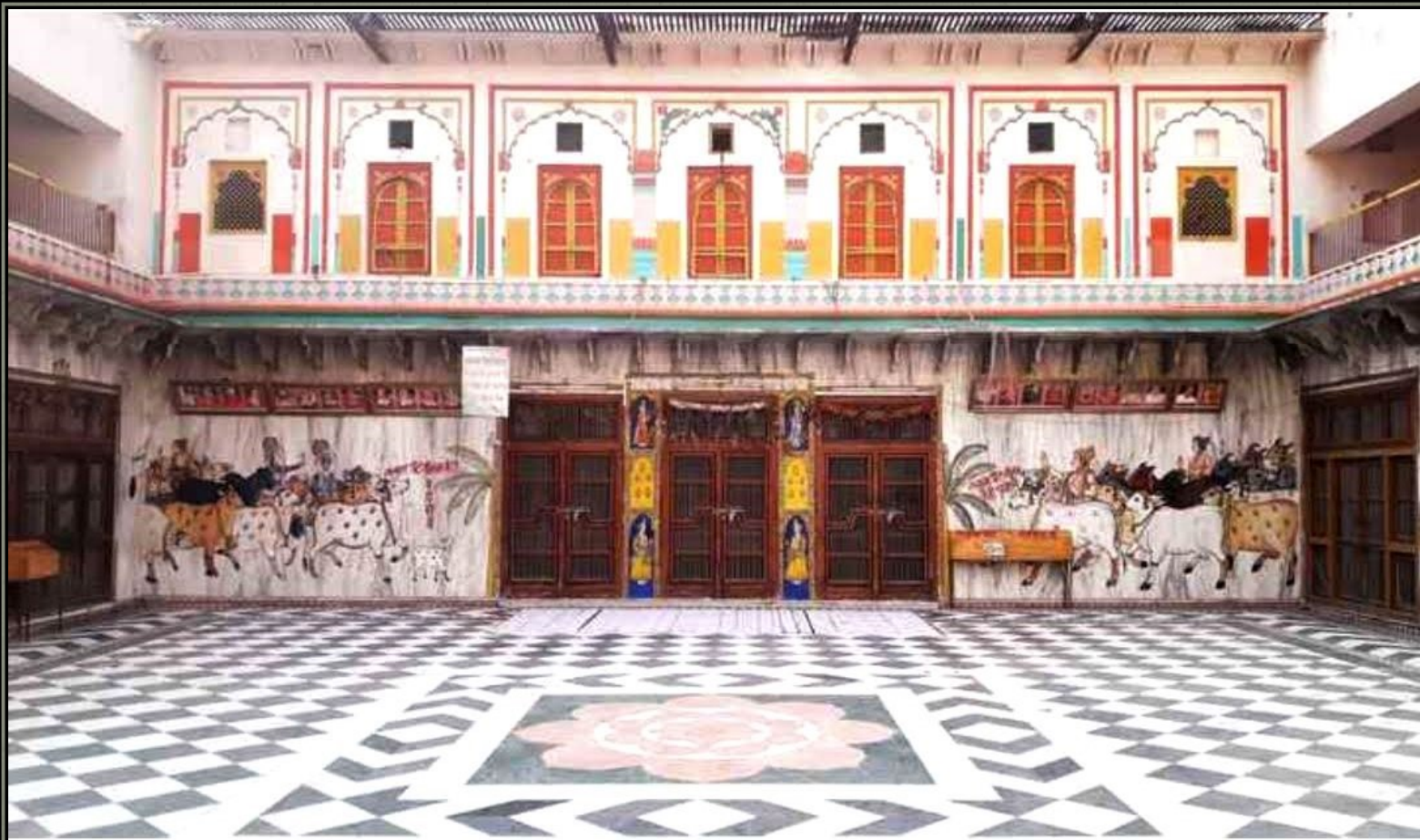
On the other side “Purushottamdas Sheth” was quite rich and was capable to offer varied expensive materials to his Sevswaroop. But both the above devotees inspite of being in different economical conditions, equally served Krishna and attained his grace. So going through these facts, it gets quite clear that there was not supposed to be any fixation regarding the offerings to be made according to the Sampradayik principles. And therefore, same principle can be understood about the living space for Bhagwadvigrah, in the devotees’ house also.

Moreover, Shri Vallabhachary himself resided in a small house in village named “Adel” on the bank of river Ganga near Prayagraaj, where he didn’t had as such the same structre of temple/Mandir we find nowadays. But after his “Tirodhan” his son, “Shri Vitthalnathji” settled in Mathura and the house he used to live is famous as “Satghara” in Mathura and even that house isn’t designed in that structure and we even find that house to be much conjested.

The oldest structure which matches to the construction pattern of Pushtimargiya temples we find nowadays, is the “Raja Thakur” temple complex in Gokul, where Shri Vitthalnathji shifted after he left Mathura. Historically once on the midnight of “Falgun sud saptami” shri Vitthalnathji told in front of his disciples that if the foundation of the house could be laid by tonight it would be quite auspicious. So one of his disciples, “Yadvendradas Kumhar” dug the foundation overnight and the construction of the complex started from the very next day. Prior to the modern period, descendants of Shri Vallabhacharya shifted in the various places of Rajasthan, to protect themselves and their religion from Mughal invaders and therefore we find the impact of Rajasthani patterns in the construction method. But inspite of these changes, no fixation was/is imposed on any disciple following the sect to build any particular mandir pattern in his house before performing Krishnaseva.

The pattern which we find nowadays in the Pushtimargiya temples, therefore isn't emerged out of any extraordinary imagination or any particularity, but the ideal housing pattern as explained in the Vastushastr was accepted for building the premises and the sentimental analysis was provided for encompassing the whole geography of "Vraj" in the Gruhmandir only. As it is believed that wherever Krishna resides, that place has to be considered as the house of "Nandrayji and Yashodaji", even if it is just a small wooden cupboard comprising a little space for Krishna, in the house of a Pushti devotee or a huge separate room or a complete structure for Seva. According to the principles of the sect, devotee has to offer everything to his Sevy to the best of his capacity, which is not bounded with any particular expectation.

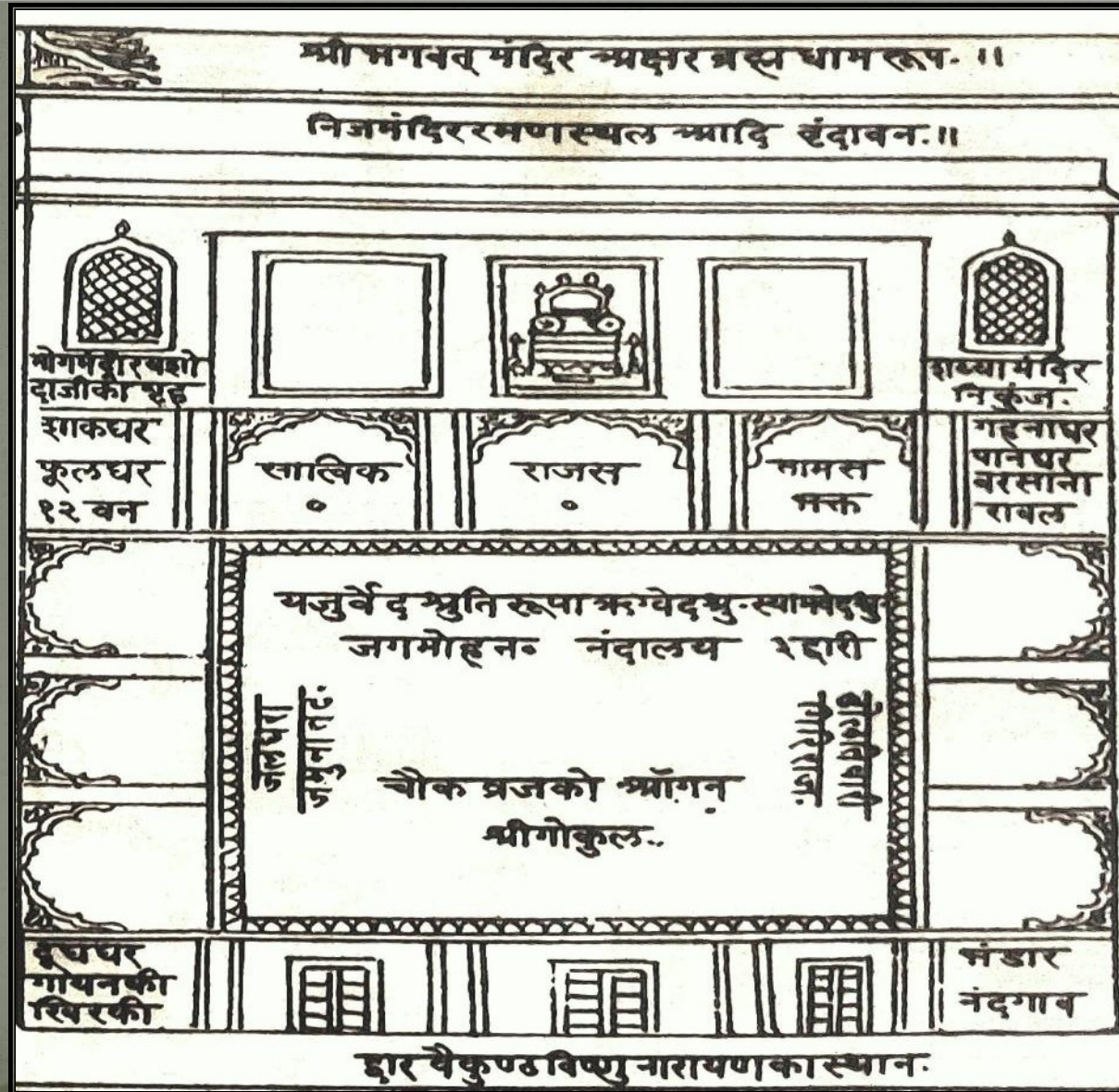
RAJA-THAKUR MANDIR, GOKUL



ARCHITECTURAL PATTERN OF A HOUSE AS EXPLAINED IN THE VASTUSHASTR IN COMPARISON TO THE PATTERN OF GRUH-MANDIR CONSTRUCUTED IN THE PUSHTI SECT

पश्चिम	वायव्य	उत्तर			ईशान	पूर्व
	धनागार पशु रखने का स्थान	रतिगृह	भण्डारगृह	औषध कक्ष	देवालय (पूजा स्थल)	
	दण्डस्थान	खुला स्थान आंगन			कोषागार	
	भोजन कक्ष				स्नानगृह	
	स्वाध्याय कक्ष				दधिमंधन	
	शस्त्रागार	शौचालय	शयनकक्ष	धी रखने का स्थान	रसोईघर	
	नैऋत्य	दक्षिण			आग्नि	

ARCHITECTURAL PATTERN OF GRUH-MANDIR IN PUSHTI-SECT



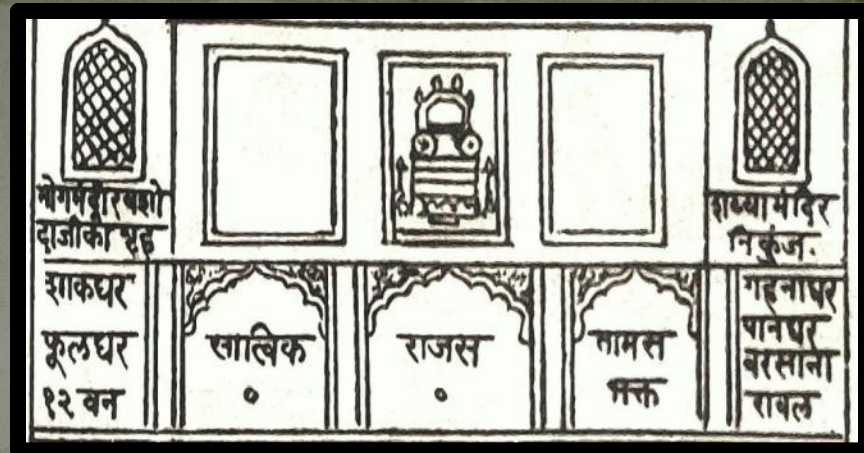
So as per the pictures placed above, it is clear that both the spaces have a open space in the middle of the structure and rooms all around. So by accepting the same pattern for the house, as Vastu explains; the place for mandir is built in Pushtimarg also, thereby not adding any special architectural features. But as the relation between a devotee and Krishna is supposed to be of “Swami and Sewak” – master and slave, traditionally the residential area used to surround the whole Mandir premises so that the area for Sevyaswaroop Shri Krishna’s place can remain separate from the usual activities of the devotee and his family along with comprising it as a part of the house also. Therefore the open place in the centre of the temple premises was not meant for giving space to the public coming for “Darshan” considering it to be public temple; as it is used and misunderstood nowadays.

"Bhaav-Paksh" / sentimental analysis of Pushtimargiya temple architecture

The whole mandir premises is considered as Vraj-Mandal, where Parabrahm Shri Krishna, the ultimate cause of the whole universe incarnated in the house of Nand and Yashoda. Therefore the place of worship/seva in the house of a Pushtimargiya devotee is supposed to be considered as the house of Nandrayji comprising of the whole Vraj-Mandal as "Leelasthali" of Shri Krishna.

Keeping this sentiment in center, the rooms and areas of the temple premises are named and considered as the different places of "Vraj" itself. Along with this, as Krishna is considered as the supreme being and his divine abode is known as "Vyaapi-Vikunth", "Golok", the mandir premises is also known as Golok-Dham and Vaikunth.

- निजमंदिर
- तिबारी



- Now we may switch to the topic of Bhaav-Paksh to understand the sentimental analysis of each and every singular body of the temple premises along with its architectural features as explained in the sect.

➤ निजमंदिर/ Nijmandir

Nijmandir is the main space where Sevyswaroop is established. That area is considered as the house of Nandrayji and Yashodaji. The main door of the Nijmandir is considered as the eye of “Lakshmiji” through whom the devotee is able to have ‘Pravesh’ in the Seva of Krishna. On both the sides of the main room, there are 3 rooms, known as भोगमंदिर, रसोई, जलघडा, and शैयामंदिर and shown in the map in the above slide. Rasoighar and Bhogmandir are the places which are considered as the areas of Shri Yashodaji where she would prepare food for Krishna and make him have the food. And according to this, the devotee who prepares food for his Sevy Shri Krishna develops the Bhaav of Yashodaji in himself/herself while preparing bhog. Jalghada is the place where water is kept for Krishna with the feeling to consider it as a space meant for Yamunaji, as she is also considered as the most ideal devotee of Krishna and therefore the water which is offered to Krishna is considered as the water of Yamunaji. Shaiyamandir is the place allotted for arranging sleeping place for Krishna and is named as Nikunj, where Krishna resides with Radhaji.

➤ तिबारी/Tibari

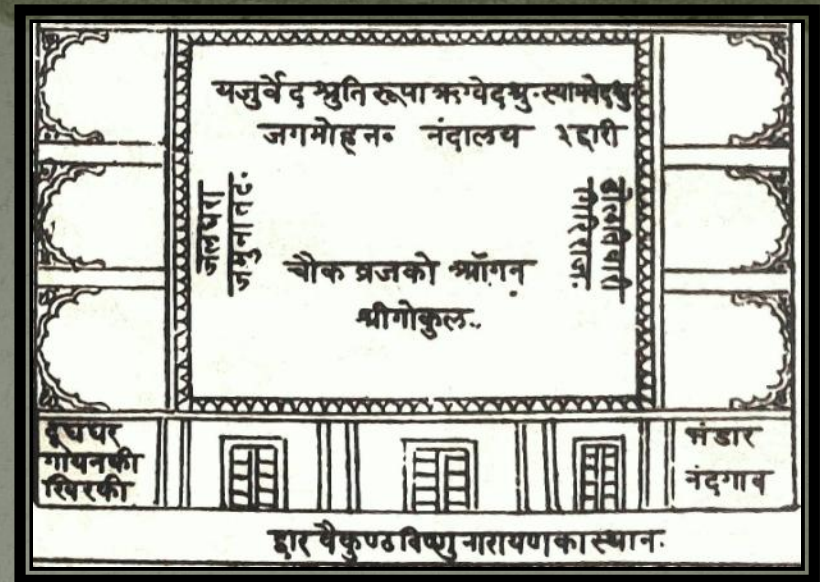
Tibari word means a place having three doors. The feeling behind keeping the three doors which open in the Nijmandir of Krishna, is to symbolise the Satvik, Raajas and Taamas bhaav/Gun (सात्त्विक-राजस-तामस गुण) of the devotee. In the 16th chapter of “Bhagwad-Geeta” bhagwan Shri Krishna explains that the whole universe is created out of these 3 “Gunas” and human body and sensory organs do work as per these 3 ‘Gun’ and therefore throughout the structure, from the main entrance gate to the last one which opens in the ‘Nijmandir’, are designed with this sentiment and being a “Jeev” and “Sevak/slave” of Bhagwan, may he accept our devotion with all these ‘Gunas’ and make us capable of being his devotee. This space of Tibari is used on special occasions as a seating place for Krishna and after ‘Akshaytritiya’ it is used as sleeping place for Krishna as in those days, the facility of electricity was not available and because of the safety issues it wasn’t even used in the Mandir premises. The gates having pores in between were designed with the purpose of having air circulation.

तोसाखाना/साजघर – Tosakhana/Saajghar

- These rooms are allotted as storage places for keeping the 'Sahity' related to seva such as 'Hindola', 'Palna', 'Saaj' etc. These are rooms on the first floor above the 'Nijmandir'.



डोलतिबारी कमलचौक जगमोहन



जगमोहन



➤ **कमलचौक / Kamalchowk** – ‘Kamalchowk is the open area or a veranda which is used during summer season to fill it with water and for placing Krishna in the ‘Naav/boat’ and creating the environment of ‘Jalvihaar’ for Krishna as he used to do in the Yamuna river. Fountains are also placed in the Kamalchowk which are used during the summer season. Other than this on the occasion of ‘Sharad-Poornima’ this place is used for placing Krishna in the moonlight and therefore the ceiling of this area is kept open. This area is considered as Vrindavan also, where Krishna used to go with his playmates.

➤ **डोलतिबारी / Doltibari** – This space is used during ‘Hindola’ utsav and on the occasion of holi. Doltibari is also considered as Girirajji where Krishna used to go for his ‘Gocharanleela’.

Once on the occasion of 'Rathyatra', Shri Vitthalnathji – the younger son of Shri Vallabhachary was in Jagannath Puri and when he witnessed the Rathyatra of Jagannathrayji, he felt that even his Sevy must be placed in the 'Rath'. So he hired a carpenter and asked him to make the same structure of the Rath for him. Then in the upcoming year he celebrated 'Rathyatra' with his Sevy Krishna in his own house and made the Rath have a round throughout the Mandir premises considering it as an outing throughout the 'Vraj' for his Sevy as the 'Bhaavna' of Gokul, Vrindavan and Goverdhan are accomplished in 'Kamalchowk', 'Doltibari', 'Tibari' and 'Nijmandir'.

➤ **जगमोहन / Jagmohan** – This space is entitled as the place for 3 vedas, 'Rigved', 'Yajurved', and 'Samved'. As Bhagwan Shri Krishna explains in Geeta, “वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृत् वेदविदेव चाऽहम्।” which means that all the vedas speak about me only, and I am one who has created the vedas for revealing my divine form. So ultimately Vedas are meant for explaining the divine form of Parabrahm Shri Krishna and therefore are meant for praising him. Considering this, the devotee sits here and speaks the glory of his Sevy – Shri Krishna.

➤ Conclusion:

- (1) Pushtibhakti Sampraday is meant for attaching the devotee with his 'Anshi' – Parabrahm Shri Krishna using the path of devotion evolved with the grace of Krishna himself.
- (2) The only way to attain Krishna is to perform selfless devotion as explained in Ved, Geeta, and Bhagwat.
- (3) Shri Vallabhachary explains that as the beings-devotees are not aware of being related to bhagwan and therefore needs to awoke the hidden feeling of devotion and love for him through his devotion only.
- (4) As a part of that devotion the format of 'Navdha-Bhakti' as explained in Bhagwat which is incorporated in the format of Gruh-Seva by the revered Acharyas of the sect considering Krishna as his everything and devoting his whole life for the sake of him devotion along with his possessions, belongings, family, body, sensory organs which can be accomplished only with the सर्वस्वसमर्पणपूर्विकासेवा at his own house / Gruhmandir.

नवधाभक्ति –
भक्तिमार्गीय
सर्वस्वसमर्पण
पूर्विका सेवा–
तनुवित्तजापूर्विका
गृहसेवा



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- सेवा ब्रजलीला - गो.श्रीश्याममनोहरजी

Note: The pictures presented in the above presentation are from my house in Mandvi-kutch, Gujarat.

Prepared under guidance of my revered guru, Shri Shyammanoharji and my father Shri Sharad Goswami.